

Themes for Interpretation and Marketing

One possible central theme for the Canal Road Scenic Byway is the idea of the route as a "gateway." In the days of the C&O Canal, this route was the gateway to the vast interior. Now, Canal Road is a gateway to the Nation's Capital, a transition from a green corridor into a major urban area. Canal Road is also a gateway to recreational opportunities and one of the main routes of access to the C&O Canal National Historic Park. It is also a "gateway" to regional history, natural resources, and Native American culture. The following themes are among those that could be interpreted.

· Enter the Nation's Past. Travel the byway and imagine yourself in different centuries. Explore historical sites from American history - the heyday of the Canal Era, the development of Georgetown, the Civil War. Enjoy well-interpreted historic and cultural tours in the National Historic Park and elsewhere along the byway. The history of Canal Road could connect with the Maryland's C&O Canal Scenic Byway route and the C&O National Historic Park. History would include the mills, quarries, and other historic features of the area, as well as the canal itself.

· Scenic, Natural Washington. Experience "Wilderness" in the City. The Potomac River and the Palisades offer scenic beauty all year. The relatively undisturbed woodlands, riparian areas, and wetlands have high natural value. Glover Archbold Park and C&O National Historic Park are renowned birdwatching areas. The geologic aspects of the Palisades - and the geotechnical engineering of the C&O canal construction - are fascinating subjects. Washington's green corridors provide significant natural areas within an urban setting. See nature in the Capital City.

Themes

Crucial to the Canal Road Scenic Byway Plan is the development of themes for interpretation and marketing. A theme, or several themes, can become associated with the corridor - everytime people think of Canal Road, they think of the theme. Potential themes are suggested on the sidebar of this and the following page. A theme can be incorporated into tours, brochures, signs, and other means of advertising and marketing the byway.

Recommendations

- Apply for additional federal funding to prepare a byway-related tourism, marketing, and promotion plan.
- Obtain additional input on desired levels of tourist activities from appropriate Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and other interested parties.
- Adapt the existing District Byway Program logo to create a separate, distinctive logo that identifies the Canal Road Scenic Byway. Design and install signs that mark the Canal Road Scenic Byway and, where appropriate, indicate direction to the byway. Where possible, incorporate this logo in the approved wayfinding and heritage trail signs being installed throughout the city.
- Develop a comprehensive tour of the historical elements of the corridor, especially the many features related to the C&O Canal through cooperative efforts of the National Park Service and the DC Heritage Tourism Coalition.
- Publicize the byway and its resources through the efforts of the DC Heritage Tourism Coalition and the Washington, DC

Convention and Tourism Corporation. This may involve:

- Posting information regarding the byway and its resources on the Washington, DC Convention and Tourism Corporation Web site (www.washington.org).
- Identification of significant cultural resources along or near the byway that are ready for tourists and accessible by either Metro, vehicles, walking, bicycles, tour bus, etc.
- Identification of significant cultural resources near the byway that are accessible by the same means as above and ready for tourists;
- Development, design, printing, and distribution of a brochure that places the byway in the larger context of the city. This brochure should relate in style, type, and size to other brochures developed or now underway featuring the cultural resources of DC neighborhoods. It should include information that shows byway linkages to existing Metro stops, heritage trails, bikeways, and walking trails.

- Market to existing tour group operators, both national and international, particularly those seeking new cultural tourism tours.

- Advertise in magazines specializing in vacation and travel, American history, architecture, and other related subjects.

- Obtain free media coverage by issuing press releases.

- Translate existing and proposed brochures into other languages, including German, Japanese, French, and Spanish.

The Component Plans
Tourism, Marketing & Promotion Plan

- Solicit assistance from the National Scenic Byways Resources Center and attend the SBRC/FHWA biennial national conference.

- Mention the Canal Road Scenic Byway in heritage trail brochures and other city tourist literature.
- Promote the byway to diverse ethnic and cultural groups. Reach out specifically to the African American travel market by promoting the Canal Road Scenic Byway in leading African American media, including Web sites such as SoulOfAmerica.com and BlackAmerica.com.

- Support the DC Heritage Tourism Coalition's work on a strategic cultural heritage tourism plan for the city in collaboration with the Washington, DC Convention and Tourism Corporation. This plan calls for the clustering and packaging of tourism-related activities across the city. The Coalition has set up affinity groups by neighborhood and theme, and this vehicle can be used to conduct an in-depth examination and review of the historic and cultural resources identified in this study as the basis for developing clusters of sites and activities around which tourism can be promoted. This process includes:

- Involving the local Advisory Neighborhood Commissions.
- Getting neighborhoods to identify the strengths and areas that need attention in each cluster.
- Developing a detailed plan that identifies what each site cluster needs (directional signs, roadway pull-offs, interpretive signs, for example) to ensure that visitors have a positive experience.

- Putting plan specifics in place, including the creation of tours that can originate from newly planned byway visitor centers.

- Identify sites that need work to make them tourist-ready. This may include:

- Cleaning up trash or providing for more strict enforcement of existing speed limits.
- Providing better crosswalk access from one side of the street where parking may exist to the site on the opposite side where a site may be located.
- Creating or enhancing trails, walkways, and streetscape amenities.
- Installing bicycle racks.

- Ensure that the necessary infrastructure (signs, improved public access, public facilities) is planned for and put in place. Plan for infrastructure improvements in the city's regular capital improvements program, and seek additional funding through other channels that may become available because of the Scenic Byway designation.

Themes, continued

· Recreation Opportunities. Many active and passive forms of recreation are available throughout this corridor, including hiking, biking, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, and birdwatching. Marketing on this theme could focus on hikers, bikers, runners, joggers, nature lovers, birdwatchers, history buffs (take the mule-drawn canal boat for a ride up the canal and learn from the NPS rangers' interpretation), people who like to fish, and people who just want the quiet experience of rowing a boat they rented at Fletcher's Boat House. It's all here.

· Native American culture. The Conoy (or Piscataway) people were related to the Delaware and Nanticoke people and part of the Iroquois confederation. Archaeological evidence dates back 2,000 years. Learn about the area's native people.



Historic Boat Rides on the Canal are offered



Connect Battery Kemble Park/Palisades Park Trail to Capital Crescent Trail

Connect Glover Archbold Park to Capital Crescent Trail using existing Pedestrian Underpass

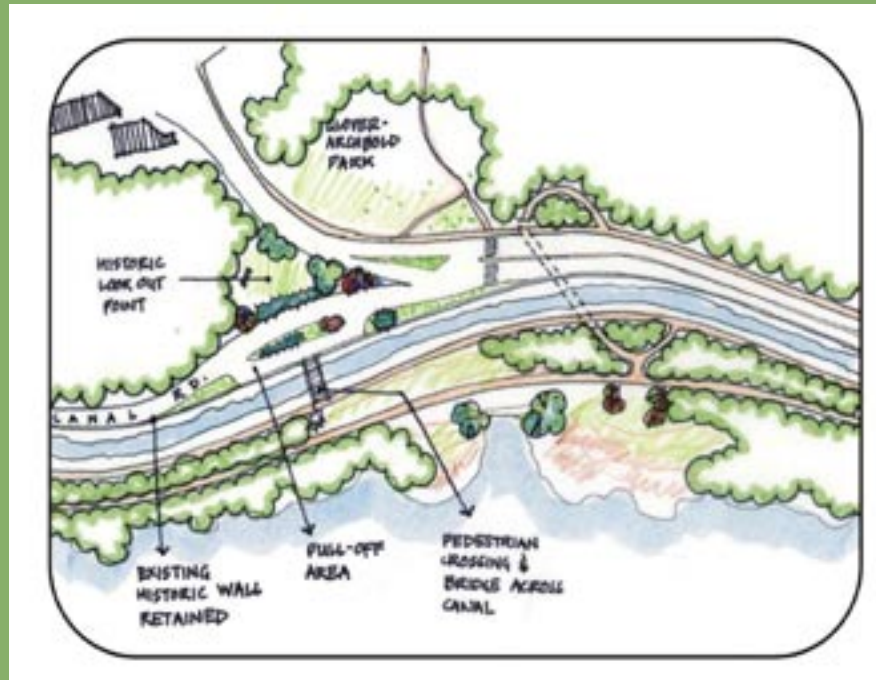


Fig.
4-2

ROADWAY PLAN

The Component Plans Roadway Plan

Roadway Modification

The Canal Road scenic corridor is an urban commuter road, bordered by designated parkland, institutions such as Georgetown University, and commercial businesses. Within this setting, roadway alignment cannot usually be altered without the taking of parkland or private property, an action that usually has substantial ramifications.

Except during the weekday peak commuter travel periods, Canal Road can adequately and safely handle traffic volumes. However, some alterations of the roadway alignment or design may be compatible with the goal of enhancing the byway experience. Improvements at specific locations may be appropriate to improve access to byway resources, such as accommodating left turn traffic movements or providing additional parking. Likewise, minor alterations in roadway alignment at specific locations may be implemented as part of other community planning initiatives. Any such alterations or modifications should take into account the need to protect and enhance the intrinsic resources that characterize the corridor as a Scenic Byway.

Recommendations

- Give priority to maintaining roadway surfaces, sidewalks, lighting, signage, striping, drainage, landscaping, street tree maintenance and replacement, and other physical components of the byway and streetscape. Require timely and quality construction work when repairs or excavations are made. Litter and trash pick-up services should also have priority.
- Conduct a survey of the Canal Road and M Street corridor to assess parking area locations and capacities to identify possible parking improvements, particularly those that would serve visitors to the Scenic Byway and the C&O Canal.

Such improvement projects should be included in the District Department of Transportation's Capital Improvement Plan.

- Explore means to better enforce vehicle speed limits and institute "traffic calming" measures on Canal Road.
- Conduct a study of the intersection of Foxhall and Canal Road to identify possible traffic flow, signal, and alignment improvements.
- Examine alternative designs for access and egress at the Abner Cloud House and Fletcher's Boat House. Special attention needs to be given to access from eastbound Canal Road and exiting the site going westbound on Canal Road. At present, both those turns require two movements by a vehicle, poor lines of sight for on-coming traffic, and a narrow roadway.

Streetscape Treatments

A streetscape is the overall impression made by the design, arrangement, and relationship of structures, landscaping, and open space along a street within a block or neighborhood. Streets that attract people tend to offer interesting things to do. They also tend to provide pedestrian-friendly amenities, such as decorative paving or brick sidewalks, trees and planters, gardens and other landscaping, a mix of uses and varying facades, colorful stores and shops, benches, outdoor cafes, and lighting on a human scale.

The importance of streetscapes is well recognized within the city. DDOT has promulgated Downtown Streetscape Regulations for an area immediately north of Pennsylvania Avenue, east of the White House, south of M Street NW, and west of Union Station - approximately within the boundaries of the Downtown Urban Renewal Area. Streetscape improvements are among the responsibilities of DDOT. The Georgetown Partnership, a Busi-



Examine access and egress at the Abner Cloud House/Fletcher's Boat House area



An outdoor cafe and attractive streetscape in Georgetown



Assess street lighting along the corridor

ness Improvement District, also has an active ongoing program to improve street trees and other streetscape amenities.

Recommendations

- Instead of only one type of streetscape treatment for the entire corridor, the treatment for each segment should be tailored according to the appearance and needs of the business district or neighborhood. Some similar elements may repeat throughout the entire route.
- Develop a lighting plan in coordination with the streetscape plan. Strive for consistency in lighting within each segment and, as a family of light fixtures (e.g., Washington Globe lights), within the entire corridor, depending on local surroundings and safety needs.
- Conduct a survey of the byway to identify areas where improved - or reduced - street lighting would enhance the roadway.

In cooperation with the District Department of Transportation, National Park Service, Casey Tree Foundation, Business Improvement Districts, and other agencies and organizations as appropriate, additional street trees should be planted along the corridor in parks, green spaces, and walkways. Identify locations where new plantings, either in the ground or in planters, would make the byways and sites more appealing to tourists and local residents. Improvement of trees and the addition of other vegetation along M Street in Georgetown should be undertaken as part of a comprehensive plan that considers parking needs, pedestrian walkways, street trees, and planter boxes. Possible improvements could also include connecting the historic alleys to M Street and addition of landscaping.

Multi-Modal Strategy

Using the roadway as a means of viewing, accessing, or experiencing byway resources can be a daunting task. Traffic volumes, traffic signals, turning vehicles and turning restrictions, double-parked delivery vehicles, pedestrian crossings, and the need to navigate congested urban roads present visiting drivers with a considerable challenge, especially if the driver is trying to enjoy the scenic views as well. Along Canal Road, the challenge to the byway user is enjoy the scenic views while navigating the roadway in busy traffic conditions often characterized by high-speed commuter traffic. Given that many visitors to the city would likely be unfamiliar with the scenic route, attempting to follow the designated byway in heavy traffic conditions would also add to the challenge, as would locating convenient parking.

Alternatives to experiencing the Canal Road Scenic Byway by private automobile are available to visitors. These means involve other modes of transportation, including bus and limousine tours, bicycling, walking, and even canoeing portions of the scenic route. Use of these modes presents a number of advantages. Traffic congestion and delays are reduced for all drivers along the route, and the byway users can choose modes of travel that give them the comfort they desire while viewing or accessing and experiencing the intrinsic scenic resources of their interest. Time and costs spent locating parking are greatly reduced or eliminated and freedom for moving from one site of interest to another is increased.

Buses & Motor Tours

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Metro Bus system serves portions of the Canal Road Scenic Byway. Metro Bus service is provided during commuter hours (approximately 7:00 a.m. to 8:40 a.m. inbound and 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. outbound on Route D5) along M Street and Canal Road to Foxhall Road and then further west along MacArthur Boulevard. The

limited hours of directional service offered on this route do not lend themselves well to scenic byway users, however. Fuller service throughout the day is provided by Metro Bus on routes (30, 32, 34, 35 & 36) servicing Georgetown via M Street and Wisconsin Avenue. The service connects upper Northwest areas of the District with Pennsylvania Avenue, Downtown, the Monumental Core, Capitol Hill, and areas of Southeast Washington. Seven Metro stations are served by this bus route.

Although the Canal Road Scenic Byway does not have direct access to the Metro subway system in the District of Columbia, reasonable access is possible from the Foggy Bottom and Rosslyn Stations on the Orange and Blue lines. Each of those stations is about a 15-minute walk from M Street in Georgetown, as well as to the C&O Canal recreational resources accessed from the towpath in Georgetown.

There are a variety of privately operated tour buses, vans, and limousines available to visitors, whether they come as individuals or in large groups. Guided tours allow tourists to view many sites without having to drive in an unfamiliar city and locate parking at every site to be visited. City-wide tours can be valuable to a visitor interested in a general view of DC, while theme-specific tours can offer more in-depth information regarding focused topics such as the National Monuments and museums, African-American heritage or the city's architecture. Both Canal Road and M Street through Georgetown can safely accommodate conventional tour buses; such buses, however, cannot be accommodated at Fletcher's Boat House because of the narrow access road and low-clearance tunnel.

Motor coach tours are provided by companies such as America's Capital Tour and Gray Line Tours, and van and limousine tours are provided by DC V.I.P. Tours. There are also fixed route tours,

which permit access to tour vehicles from designated stops for tourists who wish to visit sites at their own pace. Such tours and transportation are provided by the Tourmobile, which is under a concession contract with the National Park Service, and Old Town Trolley Tours and Gray Line Tours. Tour information from the operators indicates that Georgetown is a popular stop and that it is a convenient way for pedestrian visitors to access the historic commercial sections of M Street and the towpath along the C&O Canal.

Bicycling

In the Washington, DC metropolitan area, bicycling is an important recreational activity and, to a limited degree, a means of commuting to work. The Metro rail system allows customers to carry bicycles on board trains, thus expanding and facilitating bicycle use in the area. Bike routes throughout Washington, DC, are shown on a commercially available Washington Regional Bike Map, sponsored by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. While official on-road bikeways have been designated by the District, neither Canal Road nor M Street through Georgetown are designated as official bikeways. The Canal Road Scenic Byway is closely paralleled by two very important combined multi-use trails: the C&O Canal Towpath and the Capital Crescent Trail. Both of these trails start in lower Georgetown near the confluence of Rock Creek and the Potomac River. The C&O Canal Towpath extends from Georgetown 184 miles to Cumberland, Maryland, and is an integral part of the C&O Canal National Historic Park. The Capital Crescent Trail extends from Georgetown to Chevy Chase and Bethesda, Maryland; connections to the Rock Creek Park Trail return south to the Potomac River. This system creates a large loop trail encompassing the northwestern quadrant of the District and also connects to the system of pathways leading to the National Mall and other parts of the District.



Pedestrian Bridge over the Canal and Towpath



High speed and high volume traffic and the lack of bike lanes on Canal Road makes travel dangerous for bicyclists on the corridor